

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4469

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

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LIMDIS

S/NM FOR VANCE; AID/SER/INC FOR WAMPLER; DEA HQS

FOR EO CUSACK; SAO/MEX SWANK

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR/MEX

SUBJECT: OPERATION TRIZO (GF-5--75-8001)

1. SUMMARY: STEERING COMMITTEE AGREES THAT DEA AIRCRAFT IN MEXICO ARE NEEDED FOR RECONNAISSANCE AND VERIFICATION IN ASSISTANCE TO THE GOM ERADICATION PROGRAM. REASONING GIVEN BELOW. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING THIS PERMANENT CAMPAIGN, THE RECON AND VERIFICATION MISSIONS CONDUCTED BY DEA AGENTS/PILOTS WERE IMPORTANT IN LOCATING OPIUM FIELDS, VERIFYING DESTRUCTION AND IN MAINTAINING THE ACCURACY AND HONESTY OF THE GOM REPORTING SYSTEM. THE DEA AIRCRAFT SENT TO MEXICO ON TDY BASIS CARRIED OUT THESE JOBS OVER VERY ROUGH TERRAIN UNDER STRENUOUS AND AT TIMES HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS, AND WERE FOUND TO BE IN POOR MECHANICAL CONDITION FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT. IT IS THEREFORE OUR BELIEF THAT NEW AIRCRAFT SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR DEA USE IN MEXICO.

3. IN REACHING THIS CONCLUSION, WE CONSIDERED TWO ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF CARRYING OUT THIS MISSION:

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(A) THAT PRESENT GOM AIRCRAFT BE EMPLOYED ; (B) THAT

U.S.G. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT DIRECTLY TO THE GOM. WE REJECTED BOTH THESE ALTERNATIVES BECAUSE THEY WOULD CAUSE U.S.G. TO LOSE CONTROL OF THE USE OF THE AIRCRAFT. WHILE DEA OBSERVERS MIGHT RPT MIGHT BE TOLERATED ON VERIFICATION FLIGHTS, THE AIRCRAFT WOULD OF COURSE BE PILOTED BY MEXICANS AND THE AREAS TO BE COVERED WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE WHIM OF THE PILOT OR TO THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HIS SUPERIORS. ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES OF THESE FLIGHTS, I.E., INDEPENDENT OBSERVATION AND VERIFICATION OF NEW OR DESTROYED POPPY FIELDS, WOULD THEREFORE BE DEFEETED.

4. THIS SHOULD NOT BE READ AS A RECOMMENDATION AGAINST THE GOM'S HAVING ITS OWN RECON CAPABILITY; ON THE CONTRARY, THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM AND WE MAY IN THE FUTURE HAVE TO CONSIDER REPLACING SOME PRESENT GOM OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT (THE SIX CESSNA 185S WILL BE APPROACHING A POINT OF DIMINISHING RETURN CONCERNING MAINTENANCE AND AVAILABILITY) BUT WHAT WE (AND THIS INCLUDES AVIATION ADVISOR FORD) DO HEERBY RECOMMEND IS THAT THE U.S.G. BE GIVEN THE IMPORTANT ABILITY TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN RECON AND VERIFICATION PROGRAM IN MEXICO BY THE USE OF ITS OWN AIRCRAFT.

5. WE DO NOT PRESUME TO SUGGEST THE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT OR HOR THEY MIGHT BE FUNDED; THESE ARE DECISIONS WHICH APPROPRIATELY SHOULD BE MADE IN WASHINGTON. WE DO BELIEVE, BASED ON EMPIRICAL USE DATA GATHERED DURING THIS CAMPAIGN, THAT DEA SHOULD HAVE A TOTAL OF SIX NEW AIRCRAFT AT TIS DISPOSAL IN MEXICO.
THOMPSON

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